

SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR OF
INCREASING CONCERN

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, the situation in East Timor, which was invaded and occupied by the Indonesian Government in 1975, has been of increasing concern to Americans in recent years. Five years ago, on November 12, 1991, in full view of a British television journalist, Indonesian troops opened fire on thousands of predominantly young East Timorese at a church cemetery. The Santa Cruz massacre became known throughout the world as a result of this shocking televised film. Now, nearly 5 years later, the Timor situation still cries out for a solution.

One heroic figure in the midst of this grim tragedy is Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor. At the time of the Santa Cruz massacre, Bishop Belo helped hundreds of young East Timorese avert a violent end. To this day, Bishop Belo continues to work tirelessly to defend his people. Bishop Belo deserves our strong support for his efforts to defend human rights and to promote a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor.

As we approach the fifth anniversary of the tragic Santa Cruz massacre, I hope the administration will encourage the release of all East Timorese prisoners still being held in connection with the Santa Cruz events. Such a gesture of reconciliation would be in keeping with the portion on Humanitarianism of Indonesia's state philosophy, the Panca Sila. It would also be in keeping with Bishop Belo's extraordinary work for peace and human rights.

The United States Catholic Conference, the public policy unit of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, has long taken a strong interest in East Timor. In 1994, the Catholic Conference issued a statement of solidarity with the East Timor Church. This statement is still relevant today. I request that the Bishops' statement be published in the RECORD and urge my colleagues to read it.

STATEMENT ON EAST TIMOR

(By Bishop Daniel P. Reilly, Chairman)

Small nations oppressed by larger neighbors often draw sympathetic responses from the world community, but seldom has a population as small, and as distant from us, as East Timor held our attention as that tiny community continues to do. A population of some 650,000 Timorese has, for almost twenty years, lived under the control, and the abusive, harsh and often violent treatment, of their Indonesian military overseers.

These people have survived the brutal invasion of December 7, 1975 and the subsequent policies which have been described by serious observers as nearly genocidal. More than 100,000 people—some estimates are much higher—perished in the early years as a direct result of Indonesian military rule. The massacre of unarmed and non-violent demonstrators at the Santa Cruz cemetery on November 12, 1991, captured in horrifying detail on film by a foreign filmmaker, is now etched in the consciousness of many. Repressive policies and actions directed especially against the young people of East Timor, and often against the Catholic church there, are a continuing reality.

We admire the people of East Timor for their bravery, their suffering and their determination to preserve their culture against overwhelming odds, but we also feel the special bond with them that comes from our shared Catholic faith. The Church of East Timor, led by Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, S.D.B., has become a source of hope and encouragement for all the people. It is instructive to note that, during the 400 years of Portuguese colonial rule, Catholics remained a relatively small minority among the largely animist population, whereas today over 90% of all East Timor is now Catholic. It is surely a testament to the fidelity of that local church to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the church's commitment to the defense of human rights and the dignity of every person.

East Timor continues to pose a political challenge to the community of nations. It presents a set of conflicting interests and rights not unlike other situations in the world today. Some of these areas of conflict, as in South Africa, the Middle East, and Central America, have witnessed extraordinary breakthroughs in just the last years; others, as in the Balkans and parts of Africa, remain apparently intractable. East Timor, it seems to us, represents a far less thorny problem than many others; it is a problem that can and should be solved.

The mechanism that is already in place, namely the ministerial meetings between the governments of Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the United Nations, is the appropriate vehicle to advance the negotiations. Ever since 1983, the U.N. Secretary General has been entrusted with the task of finding a settlement to the dispute. The recent meetings, held in Rome and New York last year and in Geneva this May, thus far without participation of Timorese representatives, appear not to be moved by a sense of urgency. It seems appropriate for the Secretary General to press for more vigorous action to come from these meetings, and we urge him to do so.

The United States and Indonesia are very important partners of one another. We recognize that our government has made a number of useful overtures to Jakarta concerning East Timor, for which we are grateful. We urge, however, that new initiatives be undertaken, to encourage both the resolution of the political crisis and full compliance on issues of human rights.

We recognize that differing proposals for resolving the region's status may exist among the people, some apparently favoring annexation, others full independence, and the rest calling for a process that would eventually lead to a referendum determining the relationship. Prior to any political resolution, however, all can agree that there must be an end to the kind of political and even religious persecution and violation of human rights that continue to plague that tortured community.

A year ago, Pope John Paul II expressed to the Indonesian foreign minister his wish that new talks on the future of East Timor might promote "the well-being of that people in respect of their rights and cultural and religious traditions." We invite our Catholic people to pray for the well-being of our Timorese brothers and sisters, that they may continue to grow in their rich cultural and religious traditions, free of outside pressures and coercion. And we express our fraternal solidarity with Bishop Belo and all the church of Dili, asking God's blessing on their ministry to the people of East Timor.

SUPPORT FREEDOM OF INFORMATION—PERMIT RELEASE OF GOVERNMENT FILES ON NAZI WAR CRIMINALS

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, it is a disgrace that 50 years after the end of World War II and the tragedy of the Holocaust that U.S. intelligence files remain closed on Nazi war criminals.

The War Crimes Disclosure Act attempts to remedy this black out by improving the public's access to information. The bill expands the Freedom of Information Act and, specifically, prevents Government agencies from concealing information about people who are on the Immigration and Naturalization Service "Watch List" for their wartime activities.

Rather than take this opportunity to shed light on the activities of those committing wartime atrocities, the CIA is electing to protract the information blackout. It has attempted to stall this legislation, demanding repeated iterations in its development. It has attempted to weaken the legislation, attenuating the language of legislation to reduce its potency.

Why is the CIA thwarting this legislation? Only the CIA knows. Regardless of their rationale, they should reconsider their opposition, recognizing the value of public trust engendered by disclosure. Case in point, public outrage over CIA foreknowledge of the nefarious wartime activities of Kurt Waldheim. Had the public access to information that this bill would allow, the past of Kurt Waldheim may have been brought to the light of public debate, rather than shrouded in the veiled secrecy of intelligence files.

Recognizing the value of information to a democratic public, the Soviet Union has begun to open its Nazi era records. On this issue of critical importance to a democratic nation, the United States is not a leader. Unfortunately, we haven't even decided if we're followers.

HONORING DOM BADOLATO FOR
HIS YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, November 19, 1996 the Connecticut State AFL-CIO will hold a tribute dinner to honor Dominic J. Badolato. Dom is executive vice president of the Connecticut State AFL-CIO and president of AFSCME 1303. I have known Dom for a number of years and it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge his years of leadership and service to the public in his capacities on both the State and local level.

I'm not sure where to begin when honoring Dom, he has contributed so much to the State and people of Connecticut. Dom began his career in the Connecticut General Assembly in 1954. He served as a State Representative for 22 years, representing his constituent's interests on a number of important issues like, fair labor laws and education. Indeed, Dom's most